

NSC BRIEFING

6 JUNE 1956

SHEPILOV--NEW SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER

I. Demitri T. Shepilov, Molotov's successor, is a young (50-year old) party worker and writer. A political officer (major general) during the war, he served in the Ukraine, which may have brought him in contact with Khrushchev. In any case, he has been editor of Pravda since 1952 and a top-ranking party propagandist.

A. He also has been active in Soviet foreign relations since at least 1954, when he accompanied Khrushchev and Bulganin on their trip to China. He accompanied the Rover Boys again on the trip to Belgrade, at which time there were rumors that he had been picked to succeed Molotov. In July 1955, he represented the Soviet leadership in Cairo in setting up the arms deal with Premier Nasr.

B. He was elected a Communist Party secretary under Khrushchev in July 1955 and in February 1956 was also made a candidate member of the party presidium, a very high post for this young man.

C. Shepilov is a dedicated Marxist theoretician--the articulate and ardent advocate of "peaceful, competitive coexistence" as the key to ultimate victory of the Communist system everywhere in the world.

D. A recent visitor to Moscow asked some knowledgeable, well-connected Soviet youths just who were the really fervent, zealous party-liners in the Soviet Government today. The young Russians ticked off all the top leaders as not fitting this description, then said: "You must mean somebody like

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NEXT REVIEW DATE:
AUTH: HR 70-2
REVIEWER:
1480

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Shepilov! He is the type! We can him Dmitri Progressivny"--
which seems to mean in Russian something like "Eager Beaver."

II. Shepilov's attitude toward the Western world is strongly colored by the traditional Marxist-Leninist concept of the innate antagonism between socialism and capitalism.

A. Shepilov has consistently placed great emphasis on the role of the "national liberation struggle" in determining the outcome of the rivalry between the Communist and non-Communist world.

B. In his Lenin anniversary speech last April, he recalled that during his last years, Lenin has "constantly turned to the colonial East" and had taught that "not only were Asia and the whole of the East interested in the triumph of socialism in Europe, but also that European socialism was in its turn interested in the success of the national liberation struggle of the peoples of colonial and dependent countries."

III. Whatever else he may be--eager beaver and party liner--Shepilov is a convinced supporter and effective spokesman for the Khrushchev-Bulgaria foreign policy line.

A. He specifically told a non-Communist diplomat in Moscow a few months ago that the USSR was now entering energetically into what he called "traditional diplomacy" in the Middle East.

B. He explained that the Soviet Union now has enough economic resources, cultural base, and technical personnel, as well as a stable domestic situation, to compete successfully with the Western powers politically and economically anywhere in the world.

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